

# **Exhibit A**

On Sept. 20, 2017:

To Whom It May Concern:

This is a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

I represent a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization called Reclaim The Records. We are an activist group of genealogists, historians, journalists, and open government advocates who acquire genealogical and archival data sets and images from government sources, often through the use of Freedom of Information laws. We then upload those records to the Internet, making them freely available to the public and returning them to the public domain.

We request a copy of the Beneficiary Identification Records Locator Subsystem (BIRLS) Death File, a very large database maintained by your agency. This data has already been made available to the public before, and it is currently online at at least two major commercial genealogy websites, Ancestry.com and Fold3.com. We are now requesting a copy for our organization, so that we may post it online for free public use.

We would also like to recommend that your agency upload a copy of the file to the federal government's open data portal, data.gov.

Based on this scanned "Request for Records Disposition Authority" document, located at archives.gov...

[https://www.archives.gov/files/records-mgmt/rcs/schedules/departments/department-of-veterans-affairs/rg-0015/n1-015-11-002\\_sf115.pdf](https://www.archives.gov/files/records-mgmt/rcs/schedules/departments/department-of-veterans-affairs/rg-0015/n1-015-11-002_sf115.pdf)

...it seems that the BIRLS Death File has the VA Item Number 08-065 000, and a copy may have already been turned over to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

We request that this file be turned over to us in database format, as it already exists in a database. We would like to receive it on a portable USB drive, and we are willing to pay the costs for purchasing that drive and for its insured and trackable domestic shipping, as well as any fees associated with fulfilling this request. Please inform us of all fees in advance of fulfilling our order.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to your timely response within twenty business days, as the statute requires.

Sincerely,

Brooke Schreier Ganz

President and Founder of Reclaim The Records

<https://www.ReclaimTheRecords.org/>  
[info@reclaimtherecords.org](mailto:info@reclaimtherecords.org)

Filed via MuckRock.com

E-mail (Preferred): [43139-55427303@requests.muckrock.com](mailto:43139-55427303@requests.muckrock.com)

Upload documents directly: [https://www.muckrock.com/accounts/agency\\_login/department-veterans-affairs-veterans-benefits-administration-3138/foia-request-for-the-birls-death-file-43139/?email=foia.vbaco%40va.gov&uuid-login=ebb5e396-daa3-4400-8324-7d76e9bc2011#agency-reply](https://www.muckrock.com/accounts/agency_login/department-veterans-affairs-veterans-benefits-administration-3138/foia-request-for-the-birls-death-file-43139/?email=foia.vbaco%40va.gov&uuid-login=ebb5e396-daa3-4400-8324-7d76e9bc2011#agency-reply)

Is this email coming to the wrong contact? Something else wrong? Use the above link to let us know.

For mailed responses, please address (see note):

MuckRock News

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PLEASE NOTE: This request is not filed by a MuckRock staff member, but is being sent through MuckRock by the above in order to better track, share, and manage public records requests. Also note that improperly addressed (i.e., with the requester's name rather than "MuckRock News" and the department number) requests might be returned as undeliverable.